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Press Release

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U.S. Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney Visits Chiang Mai *Attends Wreath Laying Ceremony to Pay Tribute to American and Thai Veterans in Honor of Veteran's Day on Nov 11*

(Oct 31) U.S. Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney made her eighth visit to Chiang Mai to attend a wreath-laying ceremony with members of the Chiang Mai Veterans of Foreign Wars post at the American Volunteer Group (Flying Tigers) and Seri Thai (Free Thai) Memorial at the Chiang Mai Foreign Cemetery, in honor of U.S. Veteran's Day and Remembrance Day on November 11.

The memorial was dedicated on November 11, 2003, to recognize American volunteer fighter pilots and Thai resistance fighters who battled Japanese forces in northern Thailand and Burma during World War II.

At the Chiang Mai Foreign Cemetery, Ambassador Kenney also honored Rev. Dr. Daniel McGilvary and Mrs. Sophia McGilvary, whose graves are located there. Arriving in 1867, Rev. Dr. Daniel McGilvary established the first American presence in Chiang Mai. During his 44-years mission work, he introduced modern medicine, hospitals, education and printing in the Lanna language to northern Thailand. Mrs. Sophia McGilvary founded the first school for girls in northern Thailand, which later became Dara Academy.

Prior to the wreath-laying ceremony, Ambassador Kenney visited McCormick Hospital and the Prince Mahidol of Songkla Museum Project to promote linkages between U.S. and Thai medical professionals. The American Mission Hospital in Chiang Mai began as a small medical facility in 1888, with the first permanent building erected in 1892. In 1920, the hospital took the name McCormick in tribute to the funding provided by American donor Mrs. Cyrus McCormick of Chicago. HRH Prince Mahidol worked for a short period at McCormick Hospital in 1929 after graduating from Harvard Medical School.

Ambassador Kenney also recognized U.S. businesses in northern region by touring PepsiCo's Frito Lay plant in Lamphun, which produces Thailand's top selling snacks and employs over 1,300 local staff.

Ambassador Kenney said, "On this eighth visit I am very pleased to have the opportunity to highlight yet again the strong relationship between northern Thailand and the U.S., which dates back to the arrival of the first American missionaries in Chiang Mai. From then until now the U.S. and northern Thailand have worked together to promote strong ties in education, medicine, culture, military cooperation, business and many other areas."

Fostering U.S.-Thai relations in this new digital era, Ambassador Kenney also highlighted social media as a proactive tool in reaching out to wider audiences by hosting a social media networking lunch for local Twitterati and Facebookers.

"I truly look forward to celebrating 180 years of U.S.-Thai friendship in 2013 and am proud to continue our strong partnership," she said.